

WANTED: WORD-GAME TESTERS

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A high percentage of the competitive amusements described in Pears Word Games (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) are completely original and needed test-playing prior to publication. The result of this activity was the formation of The Pears Word Games Society, an association of independent groupings (called Chapters) of sporting logologists in various countries. None such currently exists in the United States, and this is an invitation to a **Word Ways** reader to found and organize a similar body of enthusiasts. The editor of **Word Ways** will forward a complimentary copy of my book to that reader who can make the most convincing case for his (or her) being the organizer of a Chapter.

Essentially, the United States Chapter of The Pears Word Games Society will simply amuse itself with the games presented in my book, but any constructive criticism based on experience of play will be very welcome. To give some idea of the type of original games the book contains, I quote part of a review written by Joyce Cansfield, a compiler of The Times of London crosswords (one of the most famous crosswords in the world) and a former United Kingdom Scrabble champion:

I recently took the book along to a Hilton Word Games Weekend and seized the opportunity to try out a few of the unfamiliar games with some of the keenest players in the country. The most popular one was entitled Chesterfield, a game for two players. The players select two related categories of words and each makes a secret list of six of his own category. An initial three-letter word is picked at random from a book and the players take turns to add different words of their own category in a chain, at right-angles to words already played. The winner is the player to first play his chosen six words.

My first game, on FISH and FOUL, was quickly completed but FRUIT and VEG, having extended over five sheets of paper and 72 different words, was quite a challenge and ended in stalemate with BEAN and FIG unplayed. An I and J

	T	E	N	C	H
		H			E
D	R	A	K	E	R
U					R
C					I
K					N
					G
					O
					O
					S
					E

The start of FISH & FOUL

were the available letters at the two ends of the chain but we had already utilised UGLI, BROCCOLI, ICEBERG, KIWI, LICI and had no further inspiration (any ideas?). We were using only Scrabble words because Chambers was the only reference book to hand. However, the game

can be played equally effectively with proper nouns of varying kinds.

The vast majority of the book's games are for two or more players (either spoken or pencil-and-paper), but some are for solitaire investigation (I am grateful to Leonard Gordon of **Word Ways** who provided wittier examples than mine for one of these games). I value reader comments, and in any reprint of Pears Word Games such comments and suggestions will be taken on board. The United States Chapter, though under no obligation, would earn my gratitude through similar contributions. As many previous Chapters began by test-playing new concepts, I will supply the United States Chapter, in addition to the book, with the instructions on how to play my latest invention, the game of Maggie, a competitive word game whose name honors Maggie Warburton, the special lady in my life. Only she and I have played it, and she is the current Maggie champion of the world! Since the game has not yet been published, it would be supplied to the United States Chapter under the strict condition of copyright observance (not to be played by anyone other than those whom can be trusted to respect this tacit understanding).

The Pears Word Games Societies currently has Chapters in Japan, South Africa, the north of England (which intends to play Pears word games in the Cumbrian dialect!), and my own in Chesterfield. The latter has not only organised its own private evenings of word sport but has been involved in public competition which has had media coverage in both the press and on BBC radio.

No fees, no commitments, just great fun: who will volunteer?

QUERY

On page 104 of Language on Vacation, Dmitri Borgmann gives the anagram MOTHER-IN-LAW woman "Hitler". Can anyone cite an earlier reference for this anagram in the pages of the Enigma, or is this anagram original with him?